

the Comintern has the opportunity of gaining the respect and esteem of the South African workers.

I hope that this resolution will be cabled out to South Africa with this in view.

Comrade Carr: The Presidium proposes to adopt this resolution without discussion... The resolution is carried unanimously.

Resolution On The Executions in South Africa.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International has received the news that the South African Government of General Smuts has executed four workers for having defended themselves during the mine workers' strike against the violence of the government of Lackeys in the service of gold and diamond mining capital.

The Congress denounces the South African Government which in the person of General Smuts when in Europe professed a liberal, pacifist character, while in reality it does not hesitate to murder in order to suppress the working class movement.

The Fourth Congress sends fraternal greetings to the South African workers. It is convinced that not only they will not give up their fight, but that on the contrary they will learn how to draw the native workers too into the struggle against South African Capitalism and thereby ensure common and final victory. In this struggle the South African workers may rely upon the help of the Communist International, which looks upon them as one of its outposts.

The session closed at 4,10 P. M.

Comrade Sullivan in his speech at the Plenum on November 12th (see Bulletin № 7, English edition, page 3), made a strongly worded attack against the organ of the Workers Party—"The Worker"—quoting a passage of an article in that paper, and took upon himself to present the article in question to the American Commission. After reading the article, the Commission declares that the passage in question, taken in conjunction with the

context, has quite an opposite meaning to that attached to it by Comrade Sullivan. The Commission furthermore most emphatically condemns the manner in which an organ which has rendered the greatest services in the spreading of Communist ideas in America—has been treated by Comrade Sullivan.

The American commission.

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Chairman: Comrade Kolaroff.

Contents:

„Report on the Agrarian Question“. By Comrade Varga.

Speakers: Varga, Renaud Jean, Teodorvitch, Joss, Rieux, Pauker.

Kolaroff: I declare the session open. The order of the day is Agrarian question. Comrade Varga has the floor.

Varga: Hungary—The Agrarian question was thoroughly discussed at the Second Congress of the Communist International. We adopted theses which even now form the basis of our work. The program of action proposed by the agrarian Commission is not a change from these theses, but are complementary to them. These additions are made necessary by the historical changes which have taken place in the last two years.

At the Second Congress we were all convinced that the revolution would rapidly spread Westward. It was the period of the victorious advance of the Russian army in Poland, of the spread of the Communist movement in all Europe; and under the impression of an imminent revolution, the theses formulated by the Second Congress were prepared especially for an immediate conquest of power. Today, we see that the time for the conquest of power in the European countries is not so near as we thought, and we are confronted with the necessity of recruiting the masses into our ranks and enlarging the armies of the Communist Party.

This idea is the basis of the United Front and of the present program of

agrarian action. To secure the success of our movement, to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must gain the active help of the large masses of the peasant population and neutralise another section of it. We must realise that we were not the only ones who have learned from the Russian revolution, — the bourgeoisie has also learned much. The Russian dictatorship has shown the bourgeoisie the magnitude of the danger which menaces it. It no longer believes that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a passing phase, and it guards against this. There is no longer any possibility of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by a small revolutionary group.

If our goal, then, is to win over a certain section of the peasantry and to neutralise another, the first thing we have to do is to determine the methods of our work. This method can be none other than to participate in the struggles of that section of the peasantry. The winning over of these groups cannot be accomplished by the mere drawing up of a program. In general, these groups distrust the Communist Party. It is not sufficient to draw up a good program to approach them; it is absolutely necessary to convince them of our interest in their welfare and to destroy their distrust of

the Communist Party by participating in their daily struggle. For that purpose it is necessary primarily to win over the agrarian proletariat, the poor peasantry, that is such peasants as do not possess sufficient land to provide them with a living, but are partly dependent on wage labour. The second group to win over, is the poorer section of the small peasantry. To win them over, it is first necessary to remove them from the intellectual leadership of the large land owners. This is a very hard task in Europe; the European peasantry is not such a large loose mass as the Russian peasantry before the revolution. They are organised politically, economically and co-operatively, and the large land-owners have the leadership of these organisations. It must be our work to connect up the interests of the poor peasantry with ours and remove them from the influence of the large land-owners. This task is exceedingly difficult. These difficulties arise primarily from the nature of the European Communist Parties.

Most of these parties lack sufficient strength to carry out such a campaign. Many parties are not even strong enough to influence the industrial proletariat. They have not sufficient men to carry on the propaganda among the peasant population, and as result we have the situation that the Communist Party is altogether cut off from the peasantry.

I will give you an example. I asked the following questions of the comrades representing the Rumanian Delegation in the Agrarian Commission:

What were the political consequences of the division of land among the Rumanian peasants?

He had to answer that he did not know. I do not wish thereby to cast any reproach upon the Rumanian Party. We know under what difficult conditions it has had to work during recent times. I only wish to point out that in many countries the Communist Party is not sufficiently strong to carry on any intensive propaganda in the agrarian districts. The solution of this difficulty is not that we should give up all agitation in the agrarian districts, but rather that we train leaders, agitators, Party workers from among the peasant population, from

the agrarian proletariat, and then put them in charge of this work.

This work of participating in the struggles of the various sections of the agrarian workers also presents great objective difficulties. The greatest of these is the vagueness of the class divisions of this section of the population. One sees clearly that this man is an industrial worker, this one an artisan, this one a manufacturer, and the passage from one class to another is rare and difficult. In this period of the disruption of capitalism, it often happens that an industrial worker will conduct a small speculative business as an adjunct to his ordinary work, that he manufactures certain things at home, but in general, the division is clear and sharp.

This is quite different among the agrarian population. The change from an absolute landless and propertyless agrarian proletariat to a poor peasant, then to a small peasant, then to a middle peasant and to a rich peasant is frequent. There is a constant passage from one class into the other. Neither is this class position a constant one. For instance, by a change of methods of land cultivation, the small peasant may become an employer; on the other hand outside circumstances may force him for a time to become a wage worker. So we see that the division of classes is neither constant nor clear.

I would like also to point out the quantitative difference which exists between industry and agriculture in respect to the size of the middle class. In the cities, we can practically ignore the oscillating mass of the petty bourgeois, the petty shop-keepers, the petty manufacturers etc. In certain countries, on the other hand, the agrarian proletariat is very small, and the small and middle peasantry constitutes the great majority of the population. This forces us to give this rural middle class greater attention than we do to the urban middle class.

I would like to say a few words on the economic cause of this vague division of classes in agriculture. The cause of it is that the most important means of production of agriculture, the land, is not easily divisible. It can be divided without producing a noticeable decline in production. The industrial worker could never think of dividing up a railroad, an electric

station, a large wharf of a machine shop. It is quite apparent that this would be ridiculous because it would destroy production. In agriculture on the other hand, the chief means of production, the land, may be divided up without any noticeable diminution of production. Landed estates can be diminished or increased by sale or purchase and may be divided up by legacy. This easy division of the means of production is the cause of the kin division of classes among the peasantry.

Another great difficulty lies in the different conditions prevailing in the various districts in various countries. While the problems of the industrial proletariat, the conditions on which it lives are very much the same in all countries. Agriculture presents profound differences. We may distinguish three main types. First, the colonial country with an oppressed native peasantry. I am referring to Egypt and India where the situation is as follows: The peasant is oppressed by the foreign exploiters who maintain the closest connection with the feudal landowners of that territory, with the great princes, the allies of British imperialism. In those districts the struggle against imperialism is at the same time, the struggle of the oppressed peasant against his own feudal lord; and the struggle for national liberation is also a struggle for the liberation of the peasantry from their old social bondage.

A second type is formed by the countries where considerable relics of feudalism still exist, where the bourgeois revolution has not yet accomplished its work. These relics of feudalism still exist in Germany, and they increase as we go eastward to Poland, to the Balkans, to Rumania, to Asia Minor.

The third type is found in purely capitalist countries as in America, where agriculture is a branch of capitalist production, as also in the British colonies like Canada and Australia and in England itself. There the relation is the same as in industry: exploiters and exploited. Jugoslavia shows exceptionally well the confusion of conditions prevailing in agriculture; in the newly acquired sections of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the peasants live practically in a state of serfdom in relation to their old Turkish feudal lords;

Serbia itself, is a purely democratic land of peasants; and the newly acquired sections of Hungary, i. e. South Hungary and Croatia, we find a fully developed capitalist agriculture, large land holdings with modern equipment, so that in this small country we have three different political and social types existing side by side. This makes our propaganda in the country especially difficult, because our slogans must be quite different in old Serbia from those in Bosnia, or capitalistically developed Croatia and South Hungary.

The second great difference arises in the land problem. There are countries where the demand of the peasantry for land is the chief point of interest, while in others the land problem plays absolutely no role. For instance, in Poland and in certain sections of Germany and Italy the most important question is that of land, while in America or Canada this problem does not exist because there is plenty of land. The same applies to France where the population increases slowly; one million and a half peasants fell in the war, so that there is no acute shortage of land at the present time. In Bulgaria, where a shortage of land exists, the absence of large land holdings makes a demand for land absolutely purposeless. As you see, here also the conditions are exceedingly varied. The chief characteristic of the poorer peasantry is the vagueness and the instability of their class position. This fact determines also their political role: They oscillate from one side to the other; this is a direct result of the instability of their economic basis. At one moment they feel nearer to the proletariat, in times of prosperity they feel nearer to the large peasantry. They are a varying element that must be energetically dealt with, with tactics varying with the conditions of the moment.

In this connection, I must point to the changes which have taken place in the class situation and in the political views of the peasant population as a result of the war. Briefly it is as follows. During the war, the division of the national income was in favour of agriculture and as a result, those classes of the peasantry which formerly stood nearer to the proletariat now feel a community of interests with the large peasantry. What

I wish to say is that a dividing line has been pressed lower down the social scale, that the mass which we could win over for the world revolution has become somewhat reduced as a result of the war. On the other hand, the war has sharpened the division between those elements accessible to our propaganda and those not accessible. The peasantry grew rich during the war because the price of food stuffs increased much more than of any other product. This brought wealth to those classes of the peasantry who could bring goods to the market. But those who had to live partly as wage workers, became poor during the war and the contrast increased somewhat, though naturally not as rapidly and sharply as in industry.

I wish to add that the situation has grown even worse during the last one or two years. I only need to recall the great agrarian crisis in America and in Argentine as a result of which the prices of industrial products rose, and the peasant no longer had the advantage of being able to sell his food products dear and buy his manufactured cheap goods. This new aggravation in the conditions of the peasantry manifests itself in the growing indebtedness of the peasantry in the various countries.

Comrades, this instability of the position of the bourgeois agrarian classes makes it a matter of course that wherever there exists a real agrarian proletariat, this proletariat must become the main factor of the revolutionary movement. The landless agrarian proletariat must become our trusted and reliable comrades in all the phases of the class struggle conducted by our Party. This comrades, has been distinctly stated in our program.

I would like to point out that a wholly uncomprehensible mistake, I might almost say a falsification has crept into the French translation of the theses. Paragraph 6. of the German text reads quite clearly:

"This is a most important factor for the revolutionary movement".

For some unexplainable reason, the French text reads: "One of the most important factors".

I would therefore, ask the comrade who has charge of the translation to point out clearly that the German text

is the only final and authoritative one. How can we approach the agrarian proletariat? I do not believe that a long speech is necessary on this matter. We can achieve this by supporting their immediate demands as wage workers and proletarians, by supporting them in their fight for the increase of their wages for the betterment of their working conditions, for the extension of social reforms etc. Furthermore, we should unite them for this fight, lead them, associate them for the fights of the industrial proletariat in order to prove to the agricultural working class that the Communist Party is the real Party of the proletariat. I do not believe that I need say any more. This is all contained in the program.

I now pass to our work among the semi-peasant classes, and I would like to point to the dangers which we are likely to meet in this work. The danger comes from both left and right. The danger from the right is that in those countries where there is a numerous semi-peasant and small peasant population, our propaganda may become a purely peasant propaganda with no difference in principle between the agitation of the Communist Party and that of a radical peasant party. I would like to point out two facts in this connection. First, in France, where the method of agitation of comrade Renauld Jean presents a certain danger in this direction; the interests of the agricultural proletariat is likely to be neglected for the sake of the semi- and small peasants. The same danger lurks in the report of the American Delegation where the demand is made for a minimum price for agricultural products, so-called staples to be fixed by the government, which is in direct opposition not only to the interests of the peasant population but also to those of the industrial proletariat as consumers. These are the dangers from the right.

On the other hand, I also see certain dangers from the left. Certain comrades seem to entertain an actual fear of the peasantry, a sectarian insistence on the idea that only the true proletariat, the industrial and agricultural can be the active fighters for the revolution, which the poor and small peasant classes have no interest. I believe this to be a big mistake, for there is a great number

of countries where the proletariat revolution is impossible without the active support of these classes. I might say that with the exception of England there is no single European country where the dictatorship of the proletariat can maintain itself if the bourgeoisie, the rich peasantry, the middle and small peasant classes are opposed to it. Thus, I consider the fear of the collaboration of the peasants, the doubts about the possibility of revolutionising the wide peasant masses as a political mistake just as great as the neglect of the interests of the rural workers. The matter is quite clear, only the rural proletariat will give us reliable and permanent fighting forces. But, as soon as the revolutionary movement has been initiated, the widest possible sections of the working rural population must be drawn into it. If this is not done, it will be impossible in many countries for the workers to assume power, and in our countries it will be impossible to maintain the proletariat dictatorship without their active support.

We are now concerned with the question of how to approach the various sections of the peasantry. Our program of action deals with the dependence of the peasantry on capitalism in its various forms. The dependence on loan and usurer capital, the dependence on speculative capital which buys the produce of the small peasants at low prices in order to sell it at high prices to the town population, the dependence on industrial capital which through monopoly artificially raises the prices of manufactured goods, the dependence on transport capital, which as in the case of America for example 50% of the net proceeds from the sale is frequently absorbed by the cost of transport. Perhaps there are comrades present here who have read the interesting novel by Norris which contains the following information: In America the railway companies change their tariffs every week or every fortnight. If a poor fellow, who worked himself up from a proletarian to a small hop grower by dint of very hard work, asks the manager how he fixes the tariffs, he will get the reply: "we fix it as high as the traffic will bear." Thus, they take everything beyond wages.

I am of the opinion that our chief work

must consist in supporting the various demands of the peasant population in their struggle against capitalism. This also offers the solution of the difficult problem of price. Of course, we must not say "Yes, the peasants must receive high prices for their produce," but we must make use of the question of prices in order to draw the peasantry into the struggle against capitalism. We must say: "Capitalism must be compelled to provide the peasantry with cheap means of production, cheap machinery, artificial fertiliser etc., in order to enable them to sell their produce at low prices." We must not say that we want to fix a definite price, but that the capitalists should provide the peasantry with all manufactured goods which they need for their production at low prices.

But, comrades, the chief factor of our work must be our attitude on the land question, for, land-hunger is the most active factor of all revolutionary movements in the rural districts. The question is put quite clearly; should or should not the Communist Party support the movement of the poor peasantry for the acquisition of more land within the capitalist system? Should it oppose this movement or should it declare itself in favour of it? No evasion of this question is admissible. In most countries this question is put so pointedly that the Communist Party must say either yes or no. And I say, comrades, that the Communist Party must come forward with a definite yes. The Communist Party must give active support to all the efforts of the working peasantry to obtain more land. Our tactics must consist in putting our revolutionary solution of the agrarian question against the bourgeois agrarian reforms and direct the activity of these strata of the population in our favour. The land-poor peasants such as the small and partial lease holders demand a reduction in rent. The Communist Party cannot put itself in opposition to this. It must say that it is for it, but at the same time it is obliged to tell the peasantry that this is not a solution of the problem, and that the only solution is the expropriation, the revolutionary confiscation of the land which it is now leasing. The poor peasants want to purchase land, and demand that the State should give

it to them at a low price. The Communist Party cannot say that it is against this. It must say that it is for it, but that it wants to let them have the land free of charge. It must say that it is willing to fight with them now in order to let them have it cheaply, but that at the same time it will continue to struggle until they receive the land and the inventory free of charge.

Comrades, it is only in this way that we can get into close contact with these people who, I venture to say, are to-day entirely cut off from the Communist Party. It is only in this way that we shall bring them under our influence, and unite their actions and revolutionary movements with the revolutionary movement of the urban proletariat. The following argument may be advanced against this policy: The bourgeois government seeing that the movement has become really revolutionary, may attempt to check it by distributing land to the leading and the most active elements of the peasantry, as has already happened in all the countries surrounding Russia, such as Finland, Latvia, and Esthonia (in Poland it has been promised, but not yet carried out) and in Rumania. A reporter of the English journal "The Economist" makes the following plain statement about Rumania in its issue of October 21, 1922.

"It is selfevident that it was fear and economic considerations that led to agrarian reforms in Rumania. In fact, these reforms were the price which the ruling classes paid, to protect the country against Bolshevism."

This is clear and to the point. Therefore, it might be said perhaps, that this being so there is no reason for us to support movements which at a given moment can have an anti-revolutionary effect. But, I must reiterate that this question presents itself in such a way that the Communist Party can only answer it with yes or no. In these countries it cannot say no, it must say yes, even at the risk of a partial setback. An ideal revolutionary movement would, of course, be for the struggle of the workers and the revolutionary movement of the poor peasants to run parallel until the time when the industrial proletariat will have assumed power in the cities

simultaneously with the agricultural proletariat and the poor peasants seizing the land.

In this case, the rural population would receive the land from the proletarian dictatorship, just as it happened in Russia, where, not the bourgeoisie, but the revolutionary proletariat having come into power, distributed the land: This would be an ideal development. But, we are not the only Party in the field, the bourgeoisie is also fighting, and it has the opportunity to give the land to the peasants sooner than we can, thus checking the general revolutionary movement.

Should the bourgeoisie do this, we shall have to begin anew. We must immediately take advantage of all the shortcomings of a bourgeois agrarian reform. We must be quick in pointing out that the limitations of bourgeois reform cannot give anything to the landless proletariat, for, it either sells the land or provides the money for land purchase. It cannot give land to people who have no means of production, no cattle, no seed, no machinery no stabling etc. In Yugo-Slavia, an attempt was made to give land to the poor ex-soldiers in the newly annexed Hungarian territory with the result that these men were compelled to lease out or sell the land which they had received.

To recapitulate: we must accept the risk of bourgeois agrarian reforms, and in the event of such reforms being introduced, our tactics must be—to take advantage of all the shortcomings of these bourgeois agrarian reforms.

The social consequences of such bourgeois reforms is as follows:

They temporarily check the revolutionary movement, creating a numerous section of big peasants who are in close union with the capitalists. On the other hand they render the antagonism between the rich and the poor peasant more acute, owing to the fact that the latter obtained the land on conditions which made them the debtors of the banks, thus reducing them very quickly to their former state of misery.

Comrades, as I said before, our chief concern in all our agitational work must be to put our program very clearly and definitely before the masses. The exprop-

riation of land, the confiscation of all means of production connected with the land, the free transference of this land and of the whole inventory to the landless proletarians and poor peasants. In order to win over the neutral middle peasantry, we must emphasise the fact that the proletarian revolution does away with mortgages and that everyone who hitherto leased a piece of land, would get it free of charge for his own use. We must not relax in our endeavours to bring to the fore the difference between bourgeois agrarian reform and the proletarian agrarian revolution!

In conclusion, I wish to say a few words about the organisational measures contained in our program of action. Comrades, it is of course our task to organise the rural proletariat into trade unions, wherever this was not done already, and also to form communist nuclei in these agricultural unions, in order to bring them under our influence. I must also point out that it is in our interests to develop the agricultural unions into industrial federations, in order to organise within them all those industrial workers who are permanently employed within the agricultural system, such as locksmiths, blacksmiths, woodworkers, builders and machinics on the large estates. Thus, these trade unions will afford us greater support.

On the other hand, it is to be desired that Communists living in the country enter the yellow, the bourgeois, the fascist, the counter-revolutionary trade unions in the country, form communist factions within them and work to destroy them by showing that these trade unions do not accomplish their purpose, that they conduct no fight against the employers. In the same way, the communists must enter the various organisations of the small peasants, agricultural and co-operative, form factions there also and bring these organisations under the leadership of the Communist Party. It is self-evident that the Communist Party should attempt to take the leadership in the activities of the poor peasantry. They must try to direct the struggle, to give it a more and more revolutionary purpose in order to prove to the rural population, to the proletariat, to the poor peasantry that the Communist

Party represents the interest of all the workers in the country not only in their program, but also in their actions. We must always try to connect the struggle of the rural proletariat, the fight of the agricultural and the poor peasant with that of the industrial proletariat by reciprocal support. This is no mere fantasy. In Germany, for instance, the poor peasants supported the strike of the metal workers in South Germany with fairly considerable gifts of food products; and there are surely cases when the industrial proletariat can help the poor peasants in their struggle. We must attempt whenever possible to unite these two movements which have been going on independently all the time, as for instance, by the creation of rural councils on the large land holdings, and of small peasants' councils wherever a strong Factory Councils movement exists in order to create a common councils movement in agriculture and industry. Naturally, I cannot cite all possible cases, all I can do is to refer to some examples.

Comrades, I am coming to the end of my speech. The program of action which is now before you and has been adopted unanimously by the commission does not imply that there were no differences of opinion on the matter among the various delegations. There were such, due to the very difficulty of the problem and the confusion of rural conditions. One of the comrades, I believe it was a Polish comrade used the very happy expression that the agrarian problem was an omnibus into which every one could climb. This is exactly what it is. It cannot be otherwise, for the very reason that there is no clear and sharp division of classes in agriculture. We must build up our program so that, while insisting upon the priority of the rural proletariat it will give the possibility to all working classes in agriculture to take part actively in the revolutionary movement of the Communist Party on the basis of this program. (Applause).

Kolaroff: The second speaker, Comrade Renaud Jean, now has the floor.

Renaud Jean: Various sections of the Communist International have published statements on the agrarian

question in their respective countries. It appears that communist work in the rural districts presents certain special difficulties. But in building up a revolutionary movement it is impossible to leave out of account the peasants at least in countries like France where nearly one half of the population live from working the land, for this would mean to relinquish the revolution.

Therefore, the Communist International should consider work among the peasants—propaganda, agitation, extension of Party membership—as one of its essential tasks. The French Communist Party realised this ever since its foundation. The Party Congress at Marseilles last year discussed and adopted an Agrarian Programme which had already received the approval of the Executive.

The principal characteristic of this programme was that it neglected the formulation of immediate aims and applied itself solely to an outline of agrarian organisation after the conquest of power. Why was this done? I know that this conception of an Agrarian Programme astonished a number of representatives of other sections of the International. But it is the only one which really corresponds to the present state of mind of the French peasant.

During the last few months, in preparing the report requested by the Executive, I have conducted investigations in all our federations. As I wrote a few days ago in the "Bolshevik", most of our militant comrades in the country reported an indisputable change in the mentality of the French peasant, even in such parts of the country as Brittany which has always been a centre of social conservatism. The trying experience of the war period has considerably modified the former political illusions of our rural population. It is true that in 1919, when the general election took place, the majority of them declared themselves in favour of the capitalist system and its representatives. But at the present time they are in a distinct state of resentment.

The majority of the French peasants have become conscious of the fact that our present political and economic institutions are effected by a grave crisis. A large number of them accept the proba-

bility of revolution without fear, and often with sympathy.

This fact, based not merely on my own experience, but also on the reports received from a great number of rural federations, explains the position taken by the French Party in the question of the Agrarian Programme. While in some other countries, the agricultural worker can be led to the ideas of revolution only through the stake of minor demands, such as working conditions taxation problems, etc., the French peasants, for reasons which we are about to discuss, are inclined to dispense with these preliminary stages.

The agrarian question in France presents another peculiarity. It is possible to win over to Communism, not merely the agricultural proletariat, but also the well-to-do peasants who own their fields, houses and machinery.

It is true, that the landless peasants have a special incentive to organise for the overthrow of the present system, taking the same attitude as the wage earners in industry and commerce. Dispossessed of tools, land, cattle and the buildings necessary both for living and working, they are proletarians in the same sense as their comrades of the factory and shop, notwithstanding all the exaggerated notions spread by the bourgeoisie concerning the wealth of the peasants.

Although the war has raised the wages received by the agricultural workers, they still receive a remuneration out of all proportion to the work they perform. The average is 1200 to 2000 francs per year including food and lodging, except at Brie and Beauce, where their wages are usually 3000 francs. Since the peasants of the present day do not practice the economies of their grandparents, but wish to dress decently and to have some amusement occasionally, they have but little left to save. At the end of the year tenant farmers and small peasant proprietors find themselves in an equally poor state. Those who were not mobilised, or those who left behind them on the farm a wife, children, or old people capable of working the land, have been able to make sufficient accumulations to permit them in many cases to free themselves from the exploitation of the agrar-

ian bourgeoisie. But the rest have once again fallen into poverty at the end of the year.

How many of these landless peasants are there? I hesitate even to make a guess. Statistics are made more to serve those who use them than to serve the truth. At any rate, in 1906 the number of agricultural wage earners was estimated at 1,300,000. At the end of the war, how many of these remained? Perhaps 1,000,000 or 800,000. If one adds to this total the hundreds of thousands of small farmers and tenants, the number of agricultural workers would be for 1920 about 3,700,000. We see then that the agricultural proletariat forms one third of the total rural population. To about one third of the French peasantry the question of private property presents itself in the same way as it does to the city proletariat.

We must now consider the peasant proprietors. One might at first imagine that, having the ownership of the means of production, they would not be interested in the revolution which is to accomplish what they have already accomplished for themselves. One might even think that they would fear it because of conservative propaganda; and that they are fatally condemned to become the auxiliaries of counter-revolution. Yet there are enough serious reasons for hostility on their part against the present system to permit us to hope that we may win the larger part of them to Communism. They own their own fields which since the war they have been completely freed of mortgages. But, everyday, when they enter the markets to sell their products or to buy articles which are indispensable for their living and their work, they are subjected to the workings of large scale capitalism. The commercial powers fix the prices. These peasant proprietors are anxious about the financial condition of the country. During the last few years, they have placed savings amounting to 5,000, 10,000, or 15,000 francs each in Government bonds, and look with horror upon the growth of the National Debt. They fear a fatal catastrophe. You will say that this is the attitude of capitalists. Well, they are but very modest capitalists, whose savings are sufficient only to assure their existence, in case of storms, epizoty or prolonged illness.

Besides, what matters it to us what causes revolt? The essential thing is to make the spirit of revolt break out and make use of it by transforming it into the spirit of revolution (Applause).

Above all the peasants hate militarism and the war. I have long emphasised my surprise that the Communist International does not attribute the importance it should to this hatred. Modern warfare, involving 20 countries and throwing 40 or 50 millions of men into the battlefield, constitutes a new fact which one could not have foreseen three quarters of a century ago. At that time, as to-day, the capitalist system despoiled the working class of their tools and thus enslaved them. But when the search for new sea routes, the conquest of countries producing raw material and the means of marine and land communication provoked an armed conflict, only a few hundred thousand men were involved. Now-a-days the slaughter engulfs all able-bodied men, and the developments of imperialism, together with increasing scarcity of certain raw material, increases the probability of war.

Now, to the peasant, war is the most feared method of expropriation. In France, as in all other countries engaged in war, the capitalists took 5 or 6 years of the lives of thousands of men. There were thousands of wounded and invalids; and a million and a half families were deprived of their support.

Bordiga. During the war nobody noticed this state of mind in France. Everybody was patriotic, even the peasants of whose anti-militarism you are telling us now.

Renaud-Jean. I explain this fact by the lamentable failure of the Second International in 1914. Like everyone else, the peasants were intoxicated by the patriotic propaganda of the capitalist newspapers. They were affected, like everyone else, by the influence of the money which the Government so recklessly expended in our country.

But if they had felt in the leaders of the International, whose duty it was to call for a revolt, any real support, these peasants would have followed an anti-war movement and would have brought a revolution.

If these peasants marched with the

army it was not their fault, it was above all the fault of the pre-war socialist party, of the pre-war international, which failed completely in their duty in 1914.

What I wish to say here is that in France at least (I don't know anything about other countries, I am not in the habit of talking about things of which I do not know), the hatred of war and militarism could be transformed into a real lever for the social revolution, provided that this hatred be not diverted into the hatred for certain prominent men, Poincaré or William, for example who can influence history only to a slight extent but is directed against the capitalist system itself..

Bordiga. For the war against militarism.

Renaud Jean. You may be sure that the French peasant, like the Italian peasant I suppose.....

Bordiga. Went to war only for the bourgeoisie.

Renaud Jean. In 1793 they went to war against feudalism. It was they who made the revolution. They may make another one.

All those who have escaped from the slaughter realise that the peace treaty, instead of obviating the dangers of war, have increased them. Now it is easy to show the peasants that war is the direct result of the capitalist system: and thus enhance their revolutionary will.

For these reasons the agrarian bourgeoisie exercises no such powerful influence on the small landholders in France as in most countries. One would think that, because they own land, our petty land proprietors would believe their interests to be identical with those of the agrarian bourgeoisie. To a certain extent this is true. But their daily life, their common labour, and above all the memory of the hard struggle for the land which their forefathers led brings them near to the agricultural proletariat. They hate the drone, the wealthy, the masters; and the suffering of the trenches has increased this hatred. This shows, that in the country the line is drawn between the bourgeoisie and the small landholders, and not between the small landholders and the proletariat. This is why in France there is no agrarian party similar

to those which play an important part in Central Europe.

At the same time the bourgeoisie has done everything possible to organise the mass of small landholders. They have created powerful organisations, leagues and co-operatives, and there is no doubt that the bourgeoisie sometimes succeeds in gaining the political leadership of the peasants. But often the peasant goes to the cooperative, buys fertilisers, seeds etc., brings his products to the cooperative market and votes in the cooperative organisation for the landowner. But in the political field he takes his stand against him. While the large landowners have on the whole remained faithful to the reactionary political parties, the mass of the small peasants, since the beginning of the century, voted for the radicals. In many places a struggle has been going on between the French Junkers and the peasants for the control of the municipalities. The Junkers have been driven out of the municipal offices by their former tenants who have now become small proprietors. But the small peasant, once installed in municipal office, has preserved the administrative methods of those whom he has replaced. Radicalism is only one of the means which the bourgeoisie assume in order to keep the people engaged in petty politics and distract them from the social questions.

It is true that the majority of the small landowners even before the war had already freed themselves from the influence of the large landlords. And since the war, the National Bloc, formed of a combination of bourgeois, anti-clerical parties, clericals, radicals, moderate and reactionary republicans, proved that there is no real difference between one and the other. That they all represent the interests of different groups of the bourgeoisie and, as the hatred of the small peasant for the bourgeoisie has increased during the war, it will lead him to revolution if the Communist Party performs its task properly.

Last year we attended the birth of a new union movement, in the department of the South-West. It is impossible to tell now how this movement will develop but its particular nature gives us a

clear example of the solidarity between various categories of landworkers. A conflict had arisen between the large landholders and the tenants and farmers over the division of choice livestock.

On the ground that the war constituted force majeure and of the impossibility of foreseeing the sudden variations in prices, the large landholders refused to honour their signed contracts. Therefore the tenants and farmers took part in this struggle.

Out of this, organisations grew up in which small landowners, farmers, tenants and labourers were united. It was a real peasant bloc, a union of all the exploited against the exploiters. And this was not an isolated case. The same thing appeared in other parts of France.

To sum up, for varying reasons the agricultural proletariat and the small peasants in France may be won over to the revolution. Therefore the Communist Party should conduct a special agitation among them, it should seek to form a bloc of all kinds of land workers and to connect them with the city proletariat.

There are only two convinced enemies of our cause in the country districts: the large landowners who are the descendants of the feudal landlords, and the large farmers who employ numerous wage earners and engage in industrial agriculture. But, before entering upon a struggle leading to revolution, the peasants wish to know, not in detail, but in broad outline what that revolution will do for them and with them.

I believe that the Communist International does not sufficiently realise how easy it is to show that there is not so much difference between the city and agricultural proletariat.

For the industrial proletariat as well, before giving its unreserved adhesion to the revolution, wishes to know what it means. It is only a month ago that Comrade Belfosse, secretary of the Miners' Federation, said to the committee of the United Confederation of Labour: "The hesitation in replacing the bourgeois system has its principal cause in a doubt as to the nature of the society which will replace it."

I fear that the misunderstanding existing on this point affecting the Communist International and the proletarian

masses, may assume tragic proportions. We have sought to build up an organisation for the struggle. Our first objective is the conquest of power, and this dominates over all other aims. All our energies should be bent to this end. He who does not accept this conception places himself automatically outside the Communist International. But now we see that the Secretary of one of the most powerful working class organisations in France tells us that the masses hesitate to overthrow the capitalist system and seize power, so long as they have not the conviction that communism will be better for them than the rule of the bourgeoisie. All militants who have some contact with the peasants know that they too share this feeling.

Therefore, to abstain from giving an outline of the economic organisation during the period of the dictatorship is to neglect a most important means of strengthening the revolutionary will of the proletariat. One does not mobilise revolutionary sentiment from above. The will to struggle comes from below.

It is easy enough to take refuge in the abstract, to close your ears to these practical questions of the peasants and workers, and to talk of Utopia when we ask for some details as to this future State. Utopia! Yes! if it were a question of determining the detailed organisation, politically and economically, of the proletarian state.

But this is not the case. And it is always meet to say that a programme drawn up in advance for a transitional period is never more than a possibility, and is not a certainty, that things will not come to pass exactly in the manner which one desires. There is a medium way between a total absence of a positive programme and a hazardous guess. Nowadays we only utter formulas: the inevitability of violence, dictatorship, socialisation. But these formulas do not suffice. There is a question which one always gets from peasant audiences. The day after the Revolution, what will you do? What is dictatorship? How will the Soviets function? How will you treat the question of property?

And do not forget that the thing is quite possible. Following the war and its material and human ravages, came

economic and financial crises. Thus the Revolution which ten years ago appeared far off, after a considerable number of years or centuries perhaps, is now considerably nearer to us. To endeavour to determine its general outlines is not to wander in a dream. If the conquest of power by the proletariat is accomplished in three, five, ten years from now, the distribution of land, the degree of technique development as well as the psychology of the peasant, will be practically the same as to-day. In such a short period industry itself will not have undergone a notable change. How much more, therefore will this be the case in agriculture, where any considerable change takes a much longer time.

Comrades, I have briefly sketched the special characteristics of the French agrarian problem. It is possible to win over a large number of the peasants to the Revolution within a short space of time, be they wage-earners, small landowners, or tenants. Disabused of their faith in universal suffrage and parliamentarianism by three-quarters of a century of experience, they hardly believe any longer in reforms and in the declarations of the different political parties. In order to head them to Communism, however, it be necessary to show them that they will enjoy an improved existence after the struggle will have been won.

It is after an examination of peasant psychology and of the material conditions of French agriculture—analysed in the report transmitted to the commission appointed by the Executive—that the French Communist Party has drawn up an agrarian programme which, like that which you are about to adopt, seems to answer the principal demands of communist agrarian policy.

Teodorovitch (Russia): Comrades, the fact of the almost universal survival of peasant farming this relic of the Middle Ages, may be explained on the whole by three principal factors. Firstly, the law of absolute rent based on the private monopoly of land was a stimulus to the maintenance of the system of peasant farming. Farming was the only method which permitted the landowner to receive not only rent as such, but also part of the profits of the peasant farmer and even part of wages. Secondly, the

capitalist form of land exploitation on the big estates could not attract capital for investment in agriculture, on the one hand, and the labour power of the workers on the other. Finally, mercantile, bankers and usurers' capital introduced such a system of relations in agriculture which closely resemble our domestic system of large scale manufacture both as regards to the purchase of the product of the home worker and the payment for his labour. The most exact description of agriculture could be given in the words of Marx, used by him in describing German conditions in the forties, namely that it suffered not only from the development of capitalism, but from the insufficient development of capitalism. Thus, among the principal fundamental contradictions of the capitalist mode of production the chief one is: a disturbance of the equilibrium between agriculture and industry on a world scale, the maximum concentration of industrial capital, which already tends to break through the shell of private property; and on the other hand, a process of disintegration and retrogression which we observe in agriculture, with the exception of course, that certain elements of agriculture, in the form of capitalist ownership and of large peasant farming, have adapted themselves to the capitalist forms of economy. Thus, Marx gave the right characteristic of the peasantry when he said that bourgeois society sucks the blood out of the peasants' heart, and the brain out of his head, and throws it all into the melting pot of capitalism, the modern alchemist.

Turning to conditions in Russia, we find that the characteristic features of agriculture have manifested themselves here with particular prominence and clearness. In the beginning of the XX century we find in the Russian village the survivals of feudalism in the shape of the latifundia of the nobility, the bonded serf system of payment of dues in kind and labour on the one hand and on the other, the exploitation of mercantile, usurers and extortionist capital, with the consequent decline of handicraft and petty home industries. Thus, we see all the paths along which rural life on the whole develops. But the Russian peasant economy has yet a peculiar feature in the

survival of such forms that have already disappeared in Western Europe. Such are the three-field system, scattered fields, and alternating fields, some near the peasants' homesteads, and some at considerable distance from them, which have disappeared in Western Europe long ago, because the development of capitalism has forced the peasant to adapt himself to the requirements of the market, thus abolishing all these burdensome survivals of mediævalism. In Russia these survivals persist to the present day. At the time of the 1917 Revolution, only one-Sixth of the Russian peasantry escaped the burden of the agrarian crisis by concentrating in their hands over a half of the entire agriculture of the country, while the remaining five-sixths writhed in the throes of the agrarian crisis. The weak development of the urban industries did not create facilities for the absorption of the surplus of population, nor create the demand for the products of peasant agriculture to stimulate incensified cultivation, that is the passing from crop raising to cattle breeding.

The success of our revolution was greatly due to the fact that the movement of the industrial proletariat of the cities was splendidly backed by a grand agrarian movement; on the other hand the agrarian movement was victorious in Russia because it was supported by the organised proletariat led by the Communist Party. The revolution at one blow solved the fundamental problems of the village. You know that in 1917, we were even the first to carry out the nationalisation of the land, exactly 50 years after the Lusanne Congress of the First International in 1867, which had proclaimed this idea. We confiscated the land from the squires, from the monasteries, the imperial estates and the crown lands, and handed over to the peasantry a fund of land valued at 5 billion gold roubles. At the same time we annulled the peasant mortgages which (without including Siberia) amounted to 1—1½ billion gold roubles. We relieved the peasants from paying rent, which (without including the Ukraine, Circasia, and the Caucasus) amounted to 200 million gold roubles per annum. Finally, we handed over to the peasantry live stock and equipment to the value of over 300 million

gold roubles. This was how we succeeded, not only in neutralising the peasantry, but also in getting its active support to the revolutionary conquests of the Republic. By the united efforts of the proletariat and the peasantry, all the attacks of the counter-revolutionary bands organised by landowners and capitalists were beaten back. Realising that the conquest of power will make it possible to create conditions enabling the workers and peasants to work for themselves instead of working for the exploiters, our Party acted as it did in the full knowledge that we were to have a temporary decline of production. We knew that our peasantry, owing to its backwardness, would not adopt the method of large scale capitalist farming on the confiscated large estates, but will rather proceed to parcel out the land. Indeed, we witnessed a scene which cannot be characterised otherwise than was done by a certain Russian scientist, who describes it as the transformation of the land into a molten state. It resulted in a peculiar cutting up of the land into very small lots. Statistical data indicate that in Russia at the present time the number of farms exceeding 8 desiatins of cultivated land does not exceed 2 to 4 per cent. On the other hand the group of the totally landless peasants has been greatly diminished. In the Central, Western and Eastern provinces we have an average farm area that does not exceed 4 desiatins per homestead and the Southern provinces not over 8 desiatins. Thus the land represents a picture resembling a honeycomb: petty producers, who already at the time of the French Revolution had advanced the slogan: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" (For this is truly the slogan of the petty producer). This parcelling out of the land has resulted in curtailed production of grain. At the same time a situation was brought about which made the proletariat feel the power of the peasantry as the owner of the means of subsistence. It was the period of the revolution when the country was in a precarious food condition, as a result of the imperialist war and the civil war imposed from the outside. The difficult food situation compelled us to resort to the food levy, to which the peasantry reacted in a peculiar fashion, i.e. by reducing the area of

cultivation. Reducing the area by 30 per cent as compared with 1916, the peasantry at the same time began to sow chiefly grains, while rye took the place of wheat and oats the place of barley. The peasantry confined itself to the preceding period. The peasantry reduced the cultivation of vegetable fibre plants and neglected the cultivation of seed. It is true that it was not all the result of deliberate calculation, but rather of the destruction of the productive forces of the countryside by the imperialist war, by the civil war, bad harvest, etc. Nevertheless, the fact ought to be stated, that the peasantry did resent uneducated and backward it could not grasp the magnitude of the proletarian ideals. The situation was precarious, with the land parcelled up, with production on a decline, and with the peasantry breathing discontent against proletarian struggle. It was at this stage that the proletariat, led by the Communist Party, resolved to revise the principles of its policy and to create the new form of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. During the years of so-called "military communism" we expected to obtain from the peasantry, by the method of the food levy, the necessary surplus of foodstuffs and raw materials for the re-construction and expansion of our industry, which in its turn was to distribute its products among the rural population on a systematic plan. It meant that the village was to advance a peculiar form of credit to the city. But the peasantry definitely refused this form of an alliance and the historic experience gained from these great events has caused the Party boldly and deliberately to change its policy towards it. This resulted in the proclamation of the new economic policy, based on the principle of admitting capitalistic forms of exchange in the village. The situation was fully summed up by Comrade Lenin when he said: "Capitalism is an evil when compared with Socialism. But Capitalism is a blessing and a step forward when compared with Medievalism". Since the Russian village was permeated by the most glaring of medievalism, the admission of capitalistic production in the village meant the creation of facilities for combatting these survivals.

Now, after two years' operation of the

new economic policy, we may summarise some of the results, I base my summary of the latest statistical data on the latest budget investigations. First of all we notice an equalisation of prices. Until the arrival of NEP, commercial cultures became worthless as compared with rye, and Russia became a veritable rye country; now we witness the tendency of equalisation of prices, which is a fact of colossal importance by creating the foundation for the intensification of agriculture. Intensification in its turn solves the fundamental problem of our peasant economy during the transition period towards socialism. The second tendency observed as a result of the new economic policy, may be characterised as the slowing down of the process of reducing the areas under cultivation. Another tendency is the discontinuance of the exodus of population from the city to the village; on the contrary, we see the first symptoms of the town again attracting the surplus population from the villages. Another tendency is the development of small-holding. Already in 1917, when promulgating our land laws, we proclaimed the principle of complete freedom of choice as to the forms of land tenure. Nevertheless, the peasantry went in for land re-distribution, and there was no sign of any tendency to the break up of the old village commune. Now this tendency becomes fully manifest, and it may be said to be closely related to the process of intensification, of which I have already spoken. It stands to reason that the petty proprietors will prefer that form of agriculture which is the most flexible, and which will give him the greatest possibility of manipulating his produce in the market. Such a form of agriculture, is that of small-holdings, and not of communal land tenure.

Finally, we see a tendency of differentiation among the various groups of the peasantry. Under conditions that are determined by the fluctuations of the market, we have to take a certain attitude. For instance, our decree against usurious mortgaging of harvests, which shows that we are determined to control and guide this elemental process, preventing the development of extreme forms of exploitation on the one hand, and of backwardness on the other. All the ten-

dencies I have enumerated are the direct results of the new economic policy.

Our agriculture is in an advantageous position on account of the overthrow of the dictatorship of the exploiters. There is a total absence of the artificial factors of economic exploitation. On the other hand, the co-operative activities of the population are controlled by the workers and peasants' government, which means that our co-operation has been emancipated from the bondage of bourgeois ideology prevailing in capitalist countries, where co-operation is used as a weapon to stultify the class struggle. In our country it is a form of socialist construction. All these economic and political factors entitle us to the confident hope that this process of banishing the survivals of mediavalism in our country will be a painless one. From this standpoint we may fully agree with comrade Lenin who declared at this Congress that the peasantry on the whole are contented.

In conclusion, let me quote to you the famous saying of La Bruyere about the French peasantry: "There is a race of beings, of human appearance, males and females, dirty, over-worked and sunburnt. They dig the soil, and when they rise up, one can distinguish in them the features of the human face." I would like to lay symbolic stress on the words: "When they rise up", because it seems to me of particular reference to our own Russian peasantry. Yes, when the peasants rise we see the human face in them, and the peasants can rise under the proletarian dictatorship. Only the proletarian dictatorship with its nationalisation of the land can create those conditions under which the peasantry can rise not only in the physical sense mentioned by La Bruyere, but also in the political and social sense of that word. (Cheers).

Joss (England).—Comrades, the question of the agrarian problem in relation to England has two aspects. One aspect is the National aspect; and the other aspect is international in character. We find that our problem in relation to the agrarian aspect in England is an extremely difficult matter, because of the fact that in England during the past 150 years the development of the indu-

strial resources have gone on at the expense of the development of agriculture. To-day 80% of our people are engaged in industrial pursuit, and only a matter of 20% are engaged in agriculture and the producing of food. Therefore, we find that the problem to-day in relation to the possibility of the proletarian revolution in England we will either have to develop the resources inside our own country or else we will have to become greatly interested in the agrarian development of other countries.

Now we find that not only amongst our own people in the Communist movement, but also in the working class in Scotland, one of the commonest questions which is hurled at the Communist speaker is the question—after you have had the industrial revolution, how are you going to provide food as far as your people are concerned—They refer you to the fact of the ratio of the industrial to agricultural workers. We have elements in England, and in different parts of Scotland where we have a great demand on the part of the workers, who formerly were agricultural workers, and who in the development of industry have gravitated towards the towns, and now with the breakdown of the industrial organisation in Great Britain during the past ten or eleven years, these workers are voicing an increasing demand to be resettled on the land. In the Northern Part of Britain, in Scotland, which has merely become a sportsground for the rich people, the capitalist class, this land of fertile valleys which formerly maintained large numbers of the population is now devoted to grouse, to deer, to anything but men. And as a result there is a tendency which is expressing itself in the revolt against the authorities in the Northern part of Britain for the purpose of getting the land. Many of these workers who were soldiers during the period of the War and who were told that after the war there would be a land fit for heroes, have as a result of the non-fulfilment of these promises seized the land in these areas. In those particular areas in which the agricultural workers are, the task as far as the Communist Party is concerned is either for the development of the resources natio-

nally or the extension of smallholdings for these landless people.

There is also another important factor in relation to the agrarian problem. We do not have in England the same differences as you have in the Continental countries. Our peasant population is extremely limited, the majority of the agricultural workers are agricultural proletariat. They stand on the same basis as the industrial proletariat, they act in common through the Trade union movement, and voice their demands through it, and therefore the linking up of the industrial and agricultural proletariat is a simple matter as far as England is concerned. There is a new factor which has been created, that is in the basic industry in general in England we have at the present moment about 2 million unemployed workers and in addition we have the workers in the basic industries in Coal, Iron, Steel and agriculture who, because of the economic breakdown have been pressed down to about 60% of the pre-war level. You find that the cost of living in England to-day is 80% above pre-war level. The wages of the Coal Miners, Iron and steel workers and agricultural laborers have been reduced from 20% to 30% below the pre-war level, demonstrating that they are about 60% worse off. And we also find the bourgeoisie beginning to understand that here is a problem that they must tackle. The deputy chairman of Lloyds Bank, one of those massive organisations which control industrial capitalism in England said: when looking up the figures of the census of 1921, which showed the ratio of the industrial population said that if England did not get back the trade she had in 1913 there was only room in Britain for a matter of 15,000,000 people, demonstrating quite clearly that the gradual severances of those countries which supply England with food at present—America, Canada, and India—that the increasing dependence of Britain on these countries and the increasing tendency on the part of the colonies and America to drift apart as far as England is concerned, is a peculiar problem for the Communist Party of Great Britain. It is because of that factor that we insist in the agricultural problem, not only of maintaining our close relationship with the agricul-

tural proletariat of England, but also developing to the fullest extent the resources which are needed as far as England is concerned, and also on the other hand of retaining our contact with the agrarian workers on the International field. And while Prof. Varga has taken exception of England, with the exception of England, can have a revolution without the peasant proletariat so we are faced with the problem when we do have the revolution we want to have the necessary means of retaining it, and the retaining of that proletarian revolution in England will be dependent upon the success of the Communist Party in relation to their agrarian problem, not only nationally, but internationally well.

Rieux. I do not agree with the exposure of comrade Renaud Jean. Or at least with that part concerning the Communist and the revolutionary capacity of the French peasant. Comrade Renaud Jean wishes us to believe that the French peasants are revolutionary, which is true, or that they are near to becoming revolutionary and would become rapidly under an anti-militarist propaganda,—which is dangerous.

In France there are large landed proprietors who are our irreconcilable class enemies, agricultural workers, that landed peasants, and small land owners. The wage workers, the rural proletariat have common interests with the industrial proletariat. The role of the Trade Unions, organisations such as the C.G.T.U. is to set agricultural Trade Unions and rally the wage workers of country and city for the common struggle. As to the small land owners I do not believe that comrade Renaud Jean has told exactly the truth when he stated that there is not a privileged situation as compared with that of the rural and urban workers.

Renaud Jean. I did not say that and you know it.

Rieux (Contd). During the war, the landed peasants made a considerable amount of money. We tried to prove them in our propaganda that the money which they have earned is only paper money without any real value. The peasants answered us by saying that since this paper money can be used for trading and purchasing, it creates

a more favourable situation than that of the workers. As long as the small landowners enjoy better conditions of life, we will only be able to neutralise them by promising them the revolution will not take their land, but in no case will we hope that they will become revolutionary and participate in the revolutionary struggle for power as the workers of every country and city. Comrade Renaud Jean still claims that he would be able to draw the peasants along the path of revolution by means of anti-militarist propaganda.

I do not believe this to be true. I believe that comrade Renaud Jean does not recognise the necessity of civil war, of armed conflict, without which the working class will not be able to overthrow the bourgeoisie and conquer power.

To come before the peasants and speak continually against militarism, to sow among them the hatred of the uniform, of the army, will expose us to serious danger, we must not forget that we will need an army to conquer power and defend it when we have conquered it. A certain confusion is thereby aroused; and this confusion finds its echo in the French Communist Party in our Communist meetings. There are many people who say: This is just plain militarism, we shall still remain soldiers, shall still remain soldiers. These comrades declare that they may accept the use of violence at a given moment, the use of armed force, but under the pretext of the horrors of war and this abstract theory of militarism, they refuse to prepare this army which is necessary, and to organise this violence which is inevitable.

Renaud Jean. How would you want to organise an army in France now, outside of the governmental army.

Rieux (Contd). This question has no place in the present discussion. But nevertheless I can say that we can achieve this by making propaganda among the soldiers by establishing nuclei in the army.

Renaud Jean. Well, we agree then?

Rieux (Contd). By supporting the propaganda of our youth, as we have done, by trying to conquer the army, not by saying that we must have no more army, but that we must have this force and place it at the disposal of the pro-

letariat (Applause). Comrade Renaud Jean declares that the peasant more forcefully opposes the expropriation of life than the expropriation of the land; I will repeat what comrade Bordiga has already said: During the war, the French peasants as well as all other peasants agreed to send their sons to death; they allowed themselves to be robbed of their children, but not of their money; while they have given their children without compensation, they only lent their money upon interest.

I believe that we must strive especially to draw to our side the rural wage workers (by fighting for their interests in the question of wages, of housing); they possess nothing, and we should give them as a slogan the possession of the land upon which they work. Our second task is to neutralise the small land owners; but above all we must apply all our strength for the conquest of power. To conquer power we must set into action the working masses of city and country.

Let us pass to the constructive programme; the Russian comrades have proved us by their change of policy, that we could adopt no permanent programmes and that events themselves would show us the possibilities of construction in each country on the morrow of the conquest of power.

Comrade Trotzky himself said, that there was a period when the economic life of the country, when the interests of the agricultural workers were subordinated to the necessities of the civil war, to the defence of the proletarian power.

We must not attach too much importance, and especially not have too much faith in the legend that the French peasants are revolutionary. Why have they not supported the city workers in their struggles and why have they not rid themselves of their own capitalism.

The French are not revolutionary, they are conservative. As Comrade Trotzky justly said, the French peasants are petty-bourgeois and we will be able to realise the Social Revolution in France only by dividing the peasantry, by drawing the agricultural workers into our camp and imposing upon the others the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. (Applause.)

Renaud Jean: You should print your speech and distribute among the peasants of the Gironde!

Chairman Markhlevsky: I now call upon Comrade Pauker of Rumania to address you.

Pauker (Rumania): Comrades, we agree only with the Theses in general. I believe that we owe Comrade Varga an explanation as he complained that the Rumanian Delegation had replied to the questionnaire as to what influence agrarian reform had on the peasantry in Rumania with a mere 'we don't know.'

Well, comrades, I am obliged to confirm Comrade Varga's statement. It is perhaps sad, but it is true that we do not know, that is to say, that we do not know enough about it to let the International have sufficient material for the creation of a programme of action, based not only on theory, but on practical experience. In this sense we must say that we do not know. But one should bear in mind that the Rumanian Communist Party, in spite of the praise which it has received here and in the commissions, does not actually exist as an active organisation, but is only in the initial stages of its formation, which are far from being very easy.

Moreover, I do not think that one need be ashamed to acknowledge the fact that one does not know something. For instance, we have asked Comrade Varga a plain question, whether he thought that an intensively industrialised big agricultural concern is more productive than a small peasant concern. Comrade Varga's reply was: I do not know. This shows that the question of agricultural production and of the rural movement is not exactly well known in the International and in organisations which are stronger and better organised than the Rumanian Communist Party.

The mistakes which were committed in the past by the Rumanian Socialist Party, its betrayal and reaction are responsible for the fact that the Rumanian organisation is only very small and in its initial stages, which prevents it from going into the rural districts and get a foothold there fighting against reaction and Rumanian gendarmerie.

It is for this reason, and not as Comrade Varga has wrongly stated, because not sufficient attention was paid to the peasant question, that we were obliged to say that we did not know.

Comrades, there are a few questions

which were not included in the programme of action, but which nevertheless are rather important. I do not wish to dwell on this at great length. Comrade Varga stated that especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries the question of transport and of railways, which are in private hands, are of particular importance owing to the fact that the private capitalists are clever enough to deprive the peasants of part of their earnings by regulating the railway tariffs according to the rise and fall of the corn prices.

There is a similar situation in Rumania. The Rumanian bourgeoisie reckons with the fact that the Rumanian peasantry export most of their produce, Rumania being a corn exporting country. The rise and fall of the export duties on corn which the Rumanian bourgeoisie exact. These duties are not by any means a small per centage of the total gain, but are frequently as high as 100% of the price of corn, as is the case at present. On the other hand, Comrade Varga, and I believe the Commission also are of the opinion that we cannot act against this state of things, because these are State duties and because capitalist society cannot exist without them. If this tax were abolished, another would take its place. But I believe that we would oppose the other tax, especially if it amounted to 100% of the total gain. Therefore, this point in the programme of action seems to lack logic.

As to the question of the rural proletariat in general, I believe that our conception may be correct, although we have not had as yet practical experience. We must certainly pay more attention to this question, because we can exist as a party and as a revolutionary movement only if we know how to approach the rural population. Therefore, the important question for us is to find out which sections of the rural working population is amenable to revolutionism and which only to neutralisation, and on this point we find it impossible to agree with Comrade Renaud Jean. In fact, I believe that there must be some misunderstanding on this point. What Comrade Renaud Jean told us here about the details of the question is quite correct. It is possible to win the peasantry through anti-militarism and to get the small peasants to

with us by promising them that the revolution will not deprive them of their land. But in plain German this means—neutralising the peasantry. The peasants will not take the revolution by the throat, they will not oppose it if they can say to themselves that they have nothing to lose by it. But neither will they take the bourgeoisie by the throat, which means that they will not be an active element previous or during the revolution, that they will not be among the barricade fighters. I mean of course the peasants who have enough land to keep themselves and their families. This section of the peasantry will certainly be won over by methods advocated and applied by Comrade Renaud Jean. They will be won over in the sense that they will not oppose the revolution at the moment of the struggle for power. But the peasants who have not enough land to keep themselves and their families, and who must therefore be wage earners, can be won over by us, if not now, at least in a few years time. They will take an active part in the revolutionary struggle, although we cannot of course expect on their part the revolutionary activity which we expect from the industrial proletariat and from the rural proletariat proper.

The question may also be put in such a way that after all, it is only a matter of detail whether we say in the program that we must revolutionise the peasantry or whether we say only that we expect to be able to neutralise it. As a matter of fact this is by no means the case. Comrade Renaud Jean used a fatal phrase which he always repeats in private conversation. He says that he has had much more success with Communist propaganda among the peasants than among the rural proletariat. I have always answered him that I could imagine a kind of communism with which we would have much more success among the large landed proprietors and industrial capitalists than among the proletariat.

This proves that the way we have been carrying on our propaganda in certain sections of France is false. We must insist that this question be cleared up and that we determine exactly which section of the peasantry we can neutralise, and by what means, and which section we can draw into the revolution-

ary struggle. A similarity of demands in the program of action for the industrial and rural proletariat would of course be most welcome.

Now comrades, as to the Rumanian question proper:

I believe that we owe you certain explanations in this connection and with these I will close my speech. The Rumanian bourgeoisie has been able to carry out its project of agrarian reform, while, it has not been prevented from carrying it out by the outbreak of the social revolution, and the conquest of power by the proletariat and the peasantry. It is a well known fact that Rumania is the classical land of the peasant uprisings. We have peasant uprisings every ten years. The last one broke out in the year 1907. The period between 1907 and the beginning of the war was a period of struggle between that position of the bourgeoisie which was trying to neutralise the peasantry, and the large land owners who wanted to perpetuate the old system of feudal exploitation. Rumania had been sufficiently feudalised to insure the rule of the feudal lords until the outbreak of the Russian revolution. The Russian revolution was the decisive factor which helped the peasantry to wrench the land from the hands of its feudal lords. The way it happened corresponds in general to the description in paragraph 9. of our program of action, i. e. as a general rule it was the rich peasants and those who gave their political support to such as the village mayors or similar influential personades, who got the land. The few poor peasants who did obtain any land rapidly fell under the yoke of the banks because they did not have sufficient money, sufficient machinery or sufficient cattle to cultivate the land, and were therefore forced to ask for credit from the banks which exploited them shamelessly. It is noteworthy that even the law of expropriation passed by the bourgeoisie left sufficient loopholes and evasions to sabotage the expropriation. The peasants were allowed to sell the land which of course, worked in favour of the large peasantry. Furthermore, the land remaining in the hands of the bourgeoisie, not to mention forests or vineyards, still represents more than half of the land expropriated, at least as far as old Rumania is concerned. Therefore, the slogan of expro-

priation is still capable of attracting and revolutionising the peasant masses. This is why we hope that if the Communist Party understands how to extend and advance this slogan, it will be so successful as to merit the praises of comrade Varga and of the International. (Applause).

Chairman Markhlevski: Comrades, before we begin with the translations, I would like to inform you of the commissions which are to meet today:

At 7 o'clock, meeting of the Presidium in the Lower hall;

At 7.30, meeting of the French Commission in the dining room;

At 5.30, meeting of the commission for Workers' Relief in the Hall.

At 6 o'clock, meeting of the Czechoslovak commission, likewise in this Hall. Tomorrow's session begins promptly at eleven o'clock a. m.; at the same time a meeting of the large Italian commission will take place. Both fractions are hereby notified. The meeting of the commission will take place in the lower hall at eleven o'clock sharp.

The session closed at 4.0 P.M.

BULLETIN

OF THE IV CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

№ 22.

Moscow.

December 2nd, 1922.

Twenty-Second Session.

November 25, 1922.

Chairmen: Comrades Neurath, Kolaroff.

Contents:

Discussion of the Agrarian Question (conclusion). Appointment of Editorial Commission on the Agrarian Question. Report on the Youth Movement—comrades Scheuller. Report on the Negro Question—comrades Billings, Mac Kay.

Speakers: Koszowa, Katayama, Scheuller, Billings, Mac Kay.

Chairman Neurath: I declare the session open. We will continue the discussion of the agrarian question. I will call on comrade Koszowa.

Koszowa: Comrades, I wish to discuss the agrarian question from a special standpoint. I wish to draw the attention of the Congress to the disproportion between what we say,—particularly between what the most eminent and penetrating spirits of our International have to say on the importance of the rural population during the revolutionary period,—and the theoretical and practical attitude of our Communist Party upon this question.

Lenin told us at the Second Congress of the International that the most essential and profound problem of the present time, and of every revolution,—not only of the Russian revolution, but of every social revolution—is the problem of the revolutionary alliance of the workers and the peasants. These words of Lenin did not meet with sufficient response in our International.

At the Congress of the Spartacus Bund in December 1918, Rosa Luxemburg characterised the German Revolution in the following manner; "It was above all a

political revolution, while it should have been essentially economic. At all events it was a city revolution. The villages have not yet been touched. If we earnestly desire to attain a socialist revolution, we should fix our attention on the villages as much as on the industrial centres, and in this respect we have not yet got any further than the beginning of the beginning". Since then four years have elapsed, four years of the most terrific experiences known in the world's history, Comrade Varga was right when he pointed out here all the complex reasons, all the difficulties that confront us every time we go to deal with the agrarian question.

As a matter of fact, we gave here a motley variety of conditions, and are confronted with a number of diversified problems, and great technical obstacles making our activity in the villages rather difficult. All this is quite true, but there is yet another thing, another factor which hampers our work. From a political standpoint the question is quite clear within our International, but it is not yet so to speak, organically incorporated in our political doctrine.

Comrade Zinoviev said in his report